

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CELEBRATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONSTITUTION OF COMMON- WEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2002

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues from New York, Rhode Island, and throughout the country in opposing this resolution because I, too, find no reason to celebrate the anniversary of the Constitution of Puerto Rico. This constitution prolonged the colonial status of Puerto Rico when approved in 1952, and the people of Puerto Rico continue to be dependent on the absolute powers of the United States Congress under the territorial clause of the United States Constitution.

As a result, the citizens of Puerto Rico lack full representation in the same United States Congress that retains absolute powers over their future and their children's future. Under the commonwealth status celebrated by this resolution, Puerto Rican citizens remain disenfranchised, as they cannot vote for the President or a voting Representative to the Federal Government.

I rise today to express my continued support for Puerto Rico's statehood and oppose this resolution that celebrates the status quo of the commonwealth and colonial status. I stand by my colleagues who believe that the only suitable change in the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States is an agreement that either brings Puerto Rico into statehood or independence.

CORPORATE FRAUD ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 16, 2002

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5118, the Corporate Fraud Accountability Act. I urge my colleagues to give it their support.

This bill is a necessary step to control a situation that is erupting throughout our economy. Corporate America can no longer take liberties to deliberately and purposefully deceive the American public. This legislation will create, redefine and strengthen those laws and penalties to force corporate America to stand up and be held accountable.

The recent wave of corporate scandals has shattered the companies involved, cost thousands of dedicated employees their jobs and shaken the faith of investors and the American public in the American model of capitalism. Unless this trust is restored, we run the real risk of further corporate scandal, continued meltdowns in the financial markets, and ongoing

hardship for the individual investor who sees 401K and other retirement savings disappear.

While there is little that Congress can do to prevent future problems that have yet to be uncovered from the creative accounting practices of the recent past, it can act to head off any future shenanigans from those CEOs and corporations that might be tempted to pad the bottom line in order to inflate a stock price. This legislation seeks to accomplish this objective along with the greater goal of restoring faith in the American free market system.

First, this bill will undoubtedly strengthen existing laws that will criminalize obstruction of justice such as document shredding, and provide prosecutors with the necessary tools to prosecute such actions, and create a new "Securities Fraud" section. It will also increase penalties for mail and wire fraud. The U.S. sentencing commission will then have the authority to change guidelines to reflect the grave nature of pension, securities and accounting fraud crimes.

Moreover, this measure will require top corporate executives to take responsibility and be held accountable for their actions and those of their company. It requires that these company officers certify financial statements that accurately represent the financial situation of the company. Should they fail to do so, they can then be held liable and subject to fines up to \$5 million and twenty years in prison. The bill also increases the criminal penalties for filing false statements with the SEC, and increases the fines for the corporation if a false financial statement is uncovered. Furthermore, the legislation also affects the personal incomes of the top executives. If their financial statements result in an investigation by the SEC any unusual or large payments to the executives will then be frozen.

In summary, H.R. 5118 is a necessary and positive step in reassuring the American public that corporate America is being honest and accurate in their financial disclosures. It is imperative that we send a strong message to these companies that may be falsifying records or altering their accounts that they will be held accountable for these actions, and face stiff fines and prison time for breaking such serious laws.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5118, the Corporate Accountability Act of 2002, which sends a clear message to the American public that executives and top employees of corporations will be held responsible for their actions, or face severe penalties, fines and prison time.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM AND VERA BROWN OF BRONSON, FLORIDA AND THE CHILDREN'S TABLE

HON. KAREN L. THURMAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 17, 2002

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to pay tribute to William and Vera

Brown of Bronson, Florida. Through their organization, The Children's Table, the Browns provide food for needy families in North Central Florida. Since November of last year, the organization has distributed 7,346,000 pounds of food and, incredibly, this is done on a budget of less than \$20,000! These wonderful people provide fresh produce, along with other foods, to families who would otherwise not be able to eat.

The Browns incorporated their hobby of farming into what they truly love to do—help people. It all began in 1996 when the Browns fed a single mother and her three young children. Not long after that, The Children's Table was born. The Browns would trade plants grown on their 40 acre property to local grocery stores for nonperishable food items that they would then deliver to the needy. Today, the Browns have expanded this wonderful organization to touch the lives of rural, small town and some large city families in 51 Florida counties, an area that runs from Orlando to the Georgia border and from Jacksonville to Pensacola. On a more personal note, they distribute thousands of pounds of food to a small rural community called Dunnellon, my hometown. The Browns love does not stop here, however, as they are collecting food to send to the children of Afghanistan.

The Browns have proven that neighbors can help neighbors in very caring and effective ways. They've shown that the true spirit of a community comes to light in bad times as well as in good and they've extended their hands to others to join their effort. With the assistance of an army of volunteers, donors, various community and church groups, The Children's Table has grown into an increasingly successful operation. Their goal for each day is to feed one more family and to continue doing so one family at a time. These families are in need of temporary emergency assistance. Many of them are struggling to get by following a job loss, serious illness or a death in the family. They do all of this to teach communities that they can and must do more to take care of their needy. The Browns believe that no child or adult should be deprived of the nutrition necessary to lead a healthy, happy, and productive life.

Recently the Browns were honored with the Gainesville Sun's 39th annual Community Service Award. Upon winning, Mr. Brown said, "We didn't win it," as he gave credit to the 20,000 volunteers who are active in the organization. After all, it is the volunteers who have brought the Brown's dream to life. The dream of helping as many people as possible. As selfless as ever, Mr. Brown also gave the reason for The Children's Table when he said, "People need us."

I am so proud of William and Vera Brown, The Children's Table, and all the volunteers that work so hard for such a wonderful cause. I would also like to submit for the RECORD an article from the Gainesville Sun that helps explain the goodwill of the Browns:

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

COUPLE PLEDGE TO FEED HUNGRY
GAINESVILLE SUN STAFF REPORT

When it comes to serving others, there's nothing more essential than feeding the hungry.

And that's just what Bill and Verna Brown have devoted their lives to doing for the past six years.

The Browns, co-founders of The Children's Table, an organization that provides food and assistance to the rural needy in 44 Florida counties, have been nominated for The Gainesville Sun's 39th Annual Community Service Award.

The roots of The Children's Table began with the efforts of the couple, who owned a commercial nursery, to give away food from their home garden to those who might need it. Little by little, they expanded their efforts, gathering more and more food to give away by purchasing it with their own money, asking for donations and trading plants from their nursery. They would then spend evenings delivering the food themselves.

Today, The Children's Table network distributes some 2 million pounds of fresh produce and USDA food to rural communities every month, according to Don Ricard, president of the Blessed Hope Foundation, one of many groups that works with The Children's Table. Ricard wrote one of 10 letters nominating the Browns for the award.

During 2001, the Browns put together a distribution network that extends north from Orlando to cover all of North Central Florida. They also have recently initiated hearing screening at rural food distribution sites and provided medicines to the needy.

"I have had the pleasure of working with Bill Brown on various food collection and distribution projects for the past two years," wrote Paul Fuller, a board member of Gainesville Harvest, which works with The Children's Table in their common mission to feed the hungry. "He and his wife, Verna, are the finest examples of Community Service I have ever known in my entire lifetime. . . . These folks love their fellow man and give because it is the human thing to do."

INTRODUCTION OF THE
HIGHLANDS STEWARDSHIP ACT

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 17, 2002

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Highlands Stewardship Act of 2002, H.R. 5146, a new, cooperative approach to addressing urban sprawl in our Highlands region; an area which includes critical water supplies for three of our Nation's largest metropolitan areas.

The Highlands region, stretching from eastern Pennsylvania, through New Jersey and New York, to northwestern Connecticut, includes the drinking water supply for over 11 million people, a wide diversity of significant rare and endangered plants, animals, and ecosystems agricultural and timber lands, historic sites and structures, and landscapes. It is estimated that one in twelve Americans live within two hours travel of the Highlands region and an astonishing 14 million people visit the more than 200,000 acres of public land in the Highlands region annually, exceeding visitation to even our Nation's most famous national parks. In 1992, the USDA Forest Service completed their Highlands Study which, among other things, found the region to be a "landscape of national significance."

Mr. Speaker, "Urban Sprawl" and "Smart Growth" are modern terms coined by the environmental movement to describe the unsustainable growth patterns in certain suburban and rural areas throughout our Nation and efforts to promote sound planning initiatives. Anywhere that we witness population growth, from the northeast to the southwest, urban sprawl is or will become an issue important to communities and citizens. Urban sprawl can be readily addressed with effective and educated planning, proper zoning, and financial assistance. There is no better place for us to witness the impacts of urban sprawl, or to foresee future impacts, then in the Highlands region, where, it is estimated, that we are losing approximately 5,000 acres of Highlands land and resources, each year.

As noted in the USDA Forest Service Highlands Study (1992), the draft Update (2002), and other State and local open space and planning reports, the Highlands region is being imminently threatened and that there is a national interest in protecting the natural, historical agricultural and economic benefits of the Highlands for the residents of, and visitors to, the region.

Accordingly, in October of 2000, I hosted our Highlands Preservation Summit, which began our Highlands Preservation Initiative, a comprehensive effort to develop a proposal which would find a balance between the environmental and economic needs of the region and define what role the Federal Government should play in the Highlands.

While I feel that it is inappropriate for the Federal Government to influence local decisionmaking matters, I firmly believe that the Federal Government can provide sound leadership by ensuring that our communities have the information and support needed to protect critical, regional resources. Moreover, it is important to undertake a partnership approach which does not infringe on private property rights or the ability of communities to make sovereign decisions.

All of these components have been included in our Highlands Stewardship Act.

In sum, our measure recognizes the national significance of the Highlands region by defining it as our Nation's first "Stewardship Area," modeled after National Heritage Areas and underscoring the importance of the President's call for "good stewardship" and "cooperation" where "Private organizations, landowners, government at all levels are working with each other." The measure is broken into two provisions: Land Conservation and Office of Highlands Stewardship.

In the "Land Conservation" provision, instead of using a "Federal Government knows-best" approach, this measure builds on the outstanding work already completed by our States in their open space plans. Using these existing plans, the Governors of each State work together with the Secretary of Interior to determine which projects should be funded from the federal-side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). We are also including flexibility for the use of these funds to allow for innovative conservation approaches, notably conservation easements, which allow the land to be protected, but at the same time to remain on local tax rolls.

The use of Federal-side LWCF is the most contentious issue in this measure. However the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 provides for the acquisition of land, wa-

ters, or the interests in land and waters "within the exterior boundaries of the National Park System" and for "endangered species and threatened species." As noted in our measure, the Highlands region contains or is adjacent to numerous Federal designations, including the Walkkill River National Wildlife Refuge, the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.

Mr. Speaker, our Atlantic region benefits little from the Federal-side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. However, there is no appropriate Federal designation available to meet the diverse needs of the Highlands region. Moreover, time is of the essence in protecting this critical national treasure. Use of the Federal-side Land and Water Conservation Fund for the purposes described in this measure allows us to expeditiously access existing sources of assistance; ensures the funds are used for land preservation purposes of nationally significant lands; is justified by the findings of multiple State and Federal studies; protects resources in a manner which minimizes the acquisition of additional Federal lands and the need for additional Federal staff; and affords our Nation the opportunity to use a unique approach to addressing urban sprawl, an issue not known when the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 was adopted.

Mr. Speaker, our measure also authorizes the creation of an Office of Highlands Stewardship; designed to work with the States and communities, private landowners, including farmers, and individuals, ensuring that they have the information, resources, and support needed to protect the resources of this region. This includes technical and financial assistance for Highlands communities looking to update their master-plans or attempting to reduce non-point source pollution, support for farmers to reduce run-off, ensuring that towns and villages have scientific data and information on important Highlands issues, working with private landowners, etc. Various units of government could use the assistance for planning, carrying capacity analysis, smart growth initiatives, infrastructure assessments, appropriate economic development, eco-tourism, or the development of Smart Growth Resource Centers to develop a tool box for municipalities on Smart Growth and on environmental and land use education.

Due to the multi-state nature of this region, it is important that we ensure that our communities have the opportunity to coordinate with each other and with a Federal entity to ask for information or assistance.

Finally, this measure also creates a diverse working group of citizens, organizations, communities, and other interests in the region to consult with this office and with the states and act as guides to our agencies.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, in view of the national significance of the Highlands, the Federal Government has a significant role in assisting the States in creating, protecting, conserving, preserving, and interpreting areas of significant natural, economic, historical and cultural importance in the Highlands.

New York Governor Pataki, New Jersey Governor McGreevey, Pennsylvania Governor Schweiker, and Connecticut Governor Rowland are supportive of our measure. Our colleague in the Senate, the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. CORZINE is offering a companion